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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 47
By DeBerry L

A RESOLUTION to honor former Representative Bill Purcell of Davidson County for his service as member and Chairman of the Select Committee on Children and Youth.

WHEREAS, in 1986, the Tennessee General Assembly sponsored and produced the widely acclaimed Southern Legislators' Conference on Children and Youth: Building a Legacy for Families; and

WHEREAS, among the many workshops presented at that conference was one entitled, "The Legislative Committee System: Ally or Adversary of Children?"; and

WHEREAS, workshop panelists concluded that the standing committee system in Tennessee, (and in other states), historically tended to fragment complex children's issues along committee jurisdictional lines, thereby discouraging development and enactment of broadly based, comprehensive solutions; and

WHEREAS, building on the momentum generated by that workshop and conference, in 1987, the Tennessee General Assembly established the Select Committee on Children and Youth, with members being appointed from each of the several standing committees possessing jurisdictional control of children and family issues; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, one of the original members appointed to the newly established committee was freshman legislator, Representative Bill Purcell of Davidson County; and

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WHEREAS, in 1988, Representative Purcell was the first member elected to fill the position of Committee Secretary; and, in 1989, he was elected to serve as Committee Chairman, a position in which he continuously served until his retirement from the General Assembly in 1996; and

WHEREAS, under the tireless and visionary leadership of Chairman Purcell, the Select Committee on Children and Youth worked diligently to bring the highest quality of policy analyses to a wide array of issues and to ensure that the Tennessee General Assembly and its committee system always functioned as allies of children and their families; and

WHEREAS, throughout Chairman Purcell's tenure, the Select Committee persistently supported the policy theme that strong, healthy children most often are the products of strong, healthy families; and

WHEREAS, throughout Chairman Purcell's tenure, the Select Committee worked assiduously to improve the quality and quantity of state services for delinquent youth and to promote more in-home, community-based alternatives to institutional placements; and

WHEREAS, throughout Chairman Purcell's tenure, the Select Committee uniformly endorsed the policy theme that early childhood intervention is the most effective and efficient means of preventing more serious and costly problems for children later in school and in life; and

WHEREAS, throughout Chairman Purcell's tenure, the Select Committee diligently sought to protect and promote maternal and child health; and

WHEREAS, throughout Chairman Purcell's tenure, the Select Committee consistently worked to ensure that the state acted competently, compassionately and expeditiously to fulfill its responsibilities to all children in state custody and care; and

WHEREAS, historians will note that Chairman Purcell and the Select Committee drafted, or helped to craft, the language of many of the most significant enactments of the past decade, including the following: The Family Preservation Act of 1991: Tennessee Home Ties; the

“Reasonable Efforts Legislation,” (to provide assurance that children and families receive services before placements are made outside the home); the 1994 legislation authorizing juvenile-family crisis teams; the 1989 legislation authorizing local boards of education to establish and operate before-and-after-school care; the legislation establishing the Child Care Facilities Program; The Early Childhood Development Act of 1994: Tennessee Healthy Start; the Tennessee “Smart Start” legislation; the Family Resource Center legislation; and the legislation creating the Department of Youth Development and its successor agency, the Department of Children’s Services; and

WHEREAS, one of the most fundamental and beneficial legacies afforded to children and their families by Chairman Purcell was and continues to be the ongoing, monthly public forums provided by the Select Committee for parents, service providers, child advocates, juvenile judges, educators, state administrators, scholars, community leaders, and all other persons concerned with the health, safety, and well-being of Tennessee’s children and their families; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate for this body to honor one of its former members for his tireless efforts on behalf of Tennessee children and families; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That our most valued friend and colleague, former Representative Bill Purcell of Davidson County be hereby honored and commended for his exemplary service as member and Chairman of the Select Committee on Children and Youth.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, as an expression of appreciation, this body does hereby bestow upon former Representative Bill Purcell of Davidson County the honorary title of “Chairman Emeritus of the Select Committee on Children and Youth.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, as a further expression of appreciation, this body does hereby direct the Commissioner of Safety, when issuing any license plates authorized

pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 55-4-316, to reserve exclusively for issuance to Bill Purcell, and no other person, the "KIDS FIRST!" license plate with the numerical designation of "1".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the clerk of the house of representatives is directed to deliver copies of this resolution to the Commissioner of Safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.